

# PORT OF GALVESTON

GATEWAY TO THE GULF



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**T**ravel down Galveston Bay to where it meets the Gulf of Mexico at Galveston Island and you will find the Port of Galveston — “Your Gateway to the Gulf”, located just 9.3 miles from the open sea. Originally established on land belonging to Mexico, the Port of Galveston is the oldest port in the Gulf of Mexico west of New Orleans. What began as not much more than a trading post located on the deepest natural harbor on the Texas Coast in 1825 has burgeoned into a significant contributor to the economic strength and well-being of the Galveston-Houston region and the State of Texas.

Serving as the primary point of embarkation for cruises to the western Caribbean, the Port of Galveston is the Premier Cruise Port in the Gulf of Mexico and the “Cruise Capital of Texas.” Nearly 800,000 cruise passengers annually access the Port and explore the Historic Downtown Galveston Strand District before or after their voyage. The cruise industry, operating its ships from the Port of Galveston, contributed over \$1.05 billion in direct spending and 15,541 jobs to the Texas economy in 2009.

In 2010, the Port of Galveston ranked as the only cruise ship port in Texas and #1 in the Gulf of Mexico, the 6th busiest cruise port in the U.S. and one of the top-twenty cruise home ports in the world. The Port is currently the year round “Home Port” to the Carnival Cruise Line ships, Carnival Conquest and Carnival Ecstasy, and the seasonal “Home Port” to Royal Caribbean International’s Voyager of

the Seas. September 2010 marked the 10th anniversary of Carnival Cruise Lines sailing from the Port of Galveston.

In 2011 the Port of Galveston will send its two current Carnival ships to New Orleans and will welcome the arrival of two new Carnival Cruise Lines ships. Carnival Magic, the newest ship built for the line’s fleet, holds 3,690 passengers and will offer 7-day cruises to the eastern and western Caribbean starting November of 2011. Carnival Triumph, which holds 2,758 passengers, will move from New Orleans to Galveston to offer year-round four and five-day Caribbean cruises starting in October 2011. Also in November 2011, the Royal Caribbean International ship Mariner of the Seas will move from Los Angeles, California to Galveston to conduct 7-day cruises and replace its older sister ship, Voyager of the Seas, which will also move to New Orleans.

The Port of Galveston, with over 850 acres located on Galveston and adjacent Pelican Island, also facilitates a diverse mix of domestic and international cargo that delivers value to the region and the state. The Port is a self supporting enterprise with current annual operating revenues of approximately \$23 million.

The Port of Galveston is only 45 minutes from Downtown Houston and 30 minutes from the Gulf of Mexico by water, making it ideally accessible for business and Galveston Island enjoyment. ■

*Winner of the 2004 National Council for Public-Private Partnerships – Distinguished Public-Private Partnership Infrastructure Award*